



March 3rd, 2021

The Honorable Gary A. Winfield
The Honorable Steven J. Stafstrom
The Honorable Alex Kasser
The Honorable Matt Blumenthal
The Honorable John A. Kissel
The Honorable Craig C. Fishbein
Joint Committee on Judiciary
Connecticut General Assembly
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Chairs Winfield and Stafstrom, Vice Chairs Kasser and Blumenthal, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein, and Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Jordan Budd, and I am the Executive Director of COLAGE, a national non-profit dedicated to empowering and supporting children of LGBTQ+ families. I am testifying on behalf of COLAGE in support of **Raised Bill No. 6321, An Act Concerning Adoption and Implementation of the Connecticut Parentage Act**. This bill addresses harmful gaps in current Connecticut law that directly undermine the welfare of children with LGBTQ+ parents. The CPA will protect LGBTQ+ families and ensure that our families are recognized as equals in the state of Connecticut.

For thirty years, COLAGE has been the only national organization expressly dedicated to supporting people with one or more LGBTQ+ caregivers, uniting them with a network of peers and supporting them as they nurture and empower each other to be skilled, self-confident, and just leaders in their communities. We are committed to bringing about a world where children of LGBTQ+ parents are legally secure, respected and valued for who they are. The CPA supports this mission by ensuring that *all children have equal access to secure legal relationships to their parents*.

As it stands, the laws of Connecticut disadvantage nearly 3000 children simply because their parents are LGBTQ+. In fact, Connecticut is the *only state* without protections or paths to parentage for unmarried non-biological parents to establish their legal parent-child relationship. Additionally, the state does not allow LGBTQ+ people to establish their parentage through Acknowledgement of Parentage nor does it provide protections for all children born through assisted reproduction. These deficits directly impact children with



COLAGE is the only national organization that unites people with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer parents into a network of peers and supports them as they nurture and empower each other to be skilled, self-confident, and just leaders in our collective communities.



LGBTQ+ parents. It harms them in material ways and sends a message to our community that our families are not valued or worthy of protection.

Many children with same-sex parents in Connecticut face the untold fear that if conflict or tragedy ever arise, they may be separated from one of their loving parents. They must confront the uncertainty that if a medical emergency should occur, they may not have access to health insurance, nor could they trust that both their parents could make decisions on their behalf. As a result, *all Connecticut children with LGBTQ+ parents* must experience the stigma of knowing that their family is not recognized as equals under the law.

Children should never have to experience the kind of uncertainty and fear that current Connecticut law creates for youth of LGBTQ+ parents. Children deserve to be proud of who they are and who their loving family is. We hope the state chooses to protect children of LGBTQ+ parents - and with this bill, cultivates a future in Connecticut where all families are valued, protected, and embraced.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan Budd".

Jordan Budd
Executive Director, COLAGE
www.colage.org



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